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Letter dated 25 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the latest developments in the ongoing Palestinian terrorist campaign against Israel.

Earlier today, a car bomb exploded in the vicinity of the central bus station in the Israeli city of Hadera. Sixty-six were wounded in the blast, among them an 8-month-old baby and a 10-year-old boy. Hadera was the site of a bus bombing last November in which 2 Israelis were killed and more than 60 wounded and to which I referred in my letter dated 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114).

On Wednesday evening, 23 May 2001, two Israelis — Asher Iluz, age 33, and Yitzhak Goldstein, age 29 — were travelling on a dirt road near the village of Isaskar when three Palestinian terrorists ambushed their vehicle, spraying it with bullets. Iluz later died of his wounds and Goldstein was lightly injured.

In addition, Palestinian gunmen persist in their attacks on the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Gilo, and for the first time fired on the nearby neighbourhood of Malha, one kilometre to the west. George Sportas, an 86-year-old Gilo resident, was seriously wounded outside his home on Wednesday afternoon, after being shot in the chest.

All these attacks come after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced that Israeli forces would halt all operational actions against the Palestinians and would henceforth open fire only in case of an immediate threat. This step, taken pursuant to the Mitchell Committee's report, is intended as an initial step towards quelling the violence, restoring mutual trust and bringing about a return to negotiations. The Palestinian side responded negatively to the Prime Minister's initiative, referring to it as a public relations ploy, and persisted in their attacks, which have claimed the life of one Israeli and injured scores of others in the days following the announcement.

* A/56/50.

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I should like to recall my previous letters, which detail the ongoing terrorist campaign against Israel, dated 18 May 2001 (A/56/78-S/2001/506), 11 May 2001 (A/56/72-S/2001/473), 9 May 2001 (A/56/69-S/2001/459), 1 May 2001 (A/55/924-S/2001/435), 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001 (A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

For the Palestinians to continue to denounce Israel's conduct, at the same time that they have made clear that they have no interest in responding positively to Israel's initiative for a cessation of violence, is duplicitous and reprehensible. The Palestinian campaign of incitement continues unabated, as do the activities of terrorist organizations, against whom the Palestinian leadership has taken no action. Despite signed commitments obliging the Palestinians to control violence and terrorism, attacks against Israelis continue to be carried out with the assistance, encouragement and even the direct and active participation of the official security forces of the Palestinian Authority.

Nonetheless, Israel continues to take steps to alleviate the conditions of the Palestinian population. Despite the considerable security risks, Israel has authorized the entry of an additional 4,000 Palestinian workers into Israel, and another 6,000 to work in industrial zones in proximity to their homes, bring the total number of work permits issued to 21,000. We are currently considering the possibility of increasing the total number of workers to 25,000, as the situation allows.

Israel accepts the Mitchell Committee's recommendation for a complete end to the violence, followed by a cooling off period, the undertaking of confidence-building measures, and finally a return to negotiations. The recent decision by the Israeli Government was intended as the first step in this regard. We call upon the Palestinian leadership to do their part, and to implement an unconditional and immediate cessation of violence.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under item 179 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative